

# Cap'n Warren's Ward



by JOSEPH C. LINCOLN

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## CHAPTER XIV—Continued.

"Yes. Precisely. And there were many just as valueless. But we have been gradually getting those out of the way and listing and appraising the remainder. It was a tangle. Your brother's business methods, especially of late years, were decidedly unsystematic and slipshod. It may have been the condition of his health which prevented his attending to them as he should. Or," he hesitated slightly, "it may have been that he was secretly in great trouble and mental distress. At all events, the task has been a hard one for us. But, largely owing to Graves and his patient work, our report was practically ready a month ago."

He paused. Captain Elisha, who had been listening attentively, nodded.

"Yes," he said; "you told me 'twas. What does the whole thing tot up to? What's the final figure, Mr. Graves?"

"Never mind them now, Graves," interrupted Kuhn. "The amount, roughly speaking, is close to over our original estimate, half a million."

The captain drew a breath of relief. "Well," he exclaimed, "that's all right then, ain't it? That's no poorhouse pension."

Sylvester answered. "Yes," he said, "that's all right as far as it goes."

"Humph! Well, I calculate I could make it go to the end of the route and then have enough left for a return ticket. Say," with another look at the solemn faces of the three, "what is the row? If the estate is worth half a million what's the matter with it?"

"That is what we are here this morning to discuss, captain. A month ago, as I said, we considered our report practically ready. Then we suddenly happened on the trail of something which upon investigation upset all our calculations. If true it threatened, not to mention its effect upon the estate, to prove so distressing and painful to us, Rodgers Warren's friends and legal advisers, that we decided not to alarm you, his brother, by disclosing our suspicions until we were sure there was no mistake. I did drop you a hint, you will remember."

"I remember. Now we're comin' to the rock!"

Sylvester was evidently disturbed. Captain Elisha, regarding him intently, nodded.

"I judge it's sort of hard for you to go on, Mr. Sylvester," he said. "I'll help you all I can. You and Mr. Kuhn and Mr. Graves here have found out something that ain't exactly straight in Bije's doin's—something he's done that's—well, to speak plain, that's crooked!"

"I'm afraid there's no doubt of it."

"Humph!" The captain frowned. His cigar had gone out, and he idly twisted the stump between his fingers. "Well," he said, with a sigh, "our family, generally speakin', has always held its head pretty high. Dad was poor, but he prided himself on bein' straight as a plumb line. And, as for mother, she—well, then, lookin' up quickly, he asked, 'Does anybody outside know about this?'"

"No one but ourselves—yet."

"Yet? Is it goin' to be necessary for anybody else to know it?"

"We hope not. But there is a possibility."

"I was thinkin' about the children."

"Of course. So are we all."

"Um-hm. Poor Caroline! She put her father on a sort of altar and bowed down before him, as you might say. Any sort of disgrace to his name would about kill her. As for me," with another sigh, "I ain't so much surprised as you might think. I know that sounds tough to say about your own brother, but I've been afraid all along. You see, Bije always steered pretty close to the edge of the channel. He had ideas about honesty and fair dealin' in business that didn't jibe with mine. We split on just that, as I told you, Mr. Graves, when you and I first met. He got some South Denboro folks to invest money along with him—sort of savin' account, they figured it—but I found out he was usin' it to speculate with. So that's why we had our row. I took pains to see that the money was paid back, but he and I never spoke afterward. For as my own money was concerned, I hadn't any kick, but—well, however, I'm talkin' too much. Go on, Sylvester, I'm ready to hear whatever you've got to say."

"Thank you, captain. You make it easier for me. It seems that your brother's first step toward wealth and success was taken about nineteen years ago. Then somehow or other, probably through a combination of luck and shrewdness, he obtained a grant, a concession from the Brazilian government, the long term lease of a good sized tract of land on the upper Amazon. It was very valuable because of its rubber trees."

"Hey?" Captain Elisha leaned forward. "Say that again!" he commanded sharply.

Sylvester repeated his statement. "He got the concession by paying \$20,000 to the government of Brazil," he continued. "To raise the \$20,000 he formed a stock company of 250 shares at \$100 each. One hundred of these shares were in his own name. Fifty were in the name of one 'Thomas A. Craven,' a clerk at that time in his office. Craven was only a dummy, however. Do you understand what I mean by a dummy?"

"I can guess. Sort of a wooden image that moved when Bije pulled the strings. Yes, yes, I understand well enough. Go ahead; go ahead!"

"That's it. The fifty shares were in Craven's name, but they were transferred in blank and in Mr. Warren's safe. Together with his own hundred they gave him control and a voting majority. That much we know by the records."

"I see. But this rubber con-contraption wasn't really with anything, was it?"

"Worth anything! Captain Warren. I give you my word that it was worth more than all the rest of the investments that your brother made during his lifetime."

"No!" The exclamation was almost a shout.

"Why, yes, decidedly more. Does that surprise you, captain?"

Captain Elisha was regarding the lawyer with a dazed expression. He breathed heavily. "Go on," he commanded. "But tell me this first. What was the name of this rubber concern of Bije's?"

"The Akrae Rubber company."

"I see—yes, yes. Akry, hey! Well, what about it? Tell me the rest."

"For the first year or two this company did nothing. Then in March of the third year the property was released by Mr. Warren to persons in Para, who were to develop and operate. The terms of his new lease were very advantageous. Royalties were to be paid on a sliding scale, and from the very first they were large. The Akrae company paid enormous dividends."

"Did, hey? I want to know!"

"Yes. In fact, for twelve years the company's royalties averaged \$50,000 yearly."

"Whe-ew! Captain Elisha whistled. "Fifty thousand a year!" he repeated slowly. "Bije! Bije!"

"Yes. And three years ago the Akrae company sold its lease, sold out completely to the Para people, for \$750,000."

"Godfrey's mighty! Well," after a moment, "that's what I'd call a mid-dlin' fair profit on a \$20,000 investment—not to mention the dividends."

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"No, we do not. The name upon the stub of the transfer book has been scratched out."

Captain Elisha looked the speaker in the face, then slowly turned his look upon the other two faces.

"Scratched out?" he repeated. "Who scratched it out?"

Graves shrugged his shoulders. "Yes, yes," said the captain. "You don't know, but we're all entitled to guess, hey? \* \* \* Humph!"

"If this person is living," began Sylvester. "It follows that—"

"Hold on a minute! I don't know much about corporations, of course. That's more in your line than 'tis in mine. But I want to ask one question. You say this, what d'ye call it—this Akrae thingamajig—was sold out, hull, canvas and riggin', to a crowd in Brazil? It's gone out of business, then—its dead?"

"Yes, but—"

"Wait! Ain't it customary when a sale like this is made to turn over all the stock, certificates and all? Sometimes you get stock in the new company in exchange. I know that. But to complete the trade wouldn't this extra hundred shares be turned in or some sharp questionin' done if 'twan't?"

He addressed the query to Sylvester. The latter seemed more troubled than before.

"That," he said, with some hesitation, "is one of the delicate points in this talk of ours, Captain Warren. A certificate for the missing hundred shares was turned in. It was dated at the time of the original issue, made out in the name of one Edward Bradley and transferred on the back by him to your brother—that is, it was presumably so transferred."

"Presumably—presumably? You mean—"

"I mean that this certificate is—well, let us say, rather queer. To begin with, no one knows who this Bradley is, or was, and the—well, I hate to say it, Captain Warren, but the handwriting on that Bradley signature resembles very closely that of your brother."

At length the captain raised his head. "Well," he said slowly, "we ain't children. We might as well call things by their right names. Bije forged that certificate."

"I'm afraid there is no doubt of it."

"Dear, dear, dear! Why, they put folks in state's prison for that!"

"Yes. But a dead man is beyond prisons."

"That's so. Then I don't see"—

"You will. You don't grasp the full meaning of this affair even yet. If the Bradley certificate is a forgery, a fraud from beginning to end, then the presumption is that there was never any such person as Bradley. But some one paid \$10,000 for 100 Akrae shares when the company was formed. That certificate has never been turned in. Some person or persons somewhere hold 100 shares of Akrae Rubber company stock. Think, now! Suppose that some one turns up and demands—"

"Well, I am thinkin' of it. I got the scent of what you was drivin' at five minutes ago. And I don't see that we need to be afraid. He could have put Bije in jail, but Bije is already servin' a longer sentence than he could give him. So that disgrace ain't bearin' down on us. And, if I understand about such things, his claim is against the Akrae company, and that's dead—dead as the man that started it. Maybe he could put in a keeper or a receiver or some such critter, but there's nothin' left to keep or receive. Ain't I right?"

"You are or you would be but for one thing, the really inexplicable thing in this whole miserable affair. Your brother, Captain Warren, was dishonest. He took money that didn't belong to him, and he forged that certificate. But he must have intended to make restitution. He was always optimistic and always plunging in desperate and sometimes rather shady speculations which he was sure would turn out favorably. If they had—if, for instance, the South Shore trolley combine had been put through. You knew of that, didn't you?"

"I've been told somethin' about it. Go on!"

"Well, it was not put through, so his hopes there were frustrated. And that was but one of his schemes. However, when the sale of the company was consummated he did an extraordinary thing. He made out and signed his personal note, payable to the Akrae company, for every cent he had misappropriated. And we found that note in his safe after his death. That was what first aroused our suspicions. Now, Captain Warren, do you understand?"

Captain Elisha did not understand, that was evident.

"A note!" he repeated. Bije put his note in the safe? A note promissory to pay all he'd stole. And let it there where it could be found? Why, that's pretty high unbelievable, Mr. Sylvester! He might just as well have confessed his crookedness and be done with it."

"Yes. It is unbelievable, but it is true. Graves can show you the note."

The junior partner produced a slip of paper from the portfolio and regarded it frowningly.

"Of all the pieces of sheer lunacy," he observed, "that ever came under my observation this is the worst. Here it is, Captain Warren."

He extended the paper. Captain Elisha waved it aside.

"I don't want to see it—not yet," he protested. "I want to think. I want to get at the reason if I can. Why did he do it?"

"That is what we've been tryin' to find—the reason," remarked Kuhn, "and we can only guess. Sylvester has told you the guess. Rodgers Warren"

intended or hoped to make restitution before he died."

"Yes. Knowin' Bije, I can see that. He was weak, that was his main trouble. He didn't mean to be crooked, but his knees wa'n't strong enough to keep him straight when it come to a hard push. But he made his note payable to a company that was already sold out, so it ain't good for nothin'. Now, why?"

Graves struck the table with his open hand.

"He doesn't understand at all!" he exclaimed impatiently. "Captain Warren, listen! That note is made payable to the Akrae company. Against that company some unknown stockholder has an apparent claim for two-fifths of all dividends ever paid and two-fifths of the \$750,000 received for the sale. With accrued interest that claim amounts to over \$500,000."

"Yes, but—"

"That note binds Rodgers Warren's estate to pay that claim—his own personal estate! And that estate is not worth over \$400,000! If this stockholder should appear and press his claim your brother's children would be not only penniless, but \$30,000 in debt! There; I think that is plain enough!"

He leaned back, grimly satisfied with the effect of his statement. Captain Elisha stared straight before him un-



"At last! Now it's all plain!"

seeingly, the color fading from his cheeks; then he put both elbows on the table and covered his face with his hands.

"You, see, captain," said Sylvester gently, "how very serious the situation is. Graves has put it bluntly, but what he says is literally true. If your brother had deliberately planned to hand his children over to the mercy of that missing stockholder he couldn't have done it more completely."

Slowly the captain raised his head. His expression was a strange one, agitated and shocked, but with a curious look of relief, almost of triumph.

"At last!" he said solemnly. "At last! Now it's all plain!"

"All?" repeated Sylvester. "You mean—"

"I mean everything, all that's been puzzlin' me and troublin' my head since the very beginnin'. All of it! Yes, I know wh'y. Oh, Bije, Bije, Bije!"

Kuhn spoke quickly.

"Captain," he said, "I believe you know who the owner of that 100 shares is. Do you?"

Captain Elisha gravely nodded.

"Yes," he answered, "I know him."

"Who is it?"

The question was blurted out. The captain looked at the three excited faces. He hesitated, and then, taking the stub of a pencil from his pocket, drew toward him a memorandum pad lying on the table and wrote a line upon the uppermost sheet. Tearing off the page, he tossed it to Sylvester.

"That's the name," he said.

## CHAPTER XV.

### "What Can It Mean?"

TWO more hours passed before the lawyers and their client rose from their seats about the long table. Even then the consultation was not at an end. Sylvester and the captain lunched together at the Central club and sat in the smoking room until after 4, talking earnestly. When they parted the attorney was grave and troubled.

"All right, Captain Warren," he said; "I'll do it. And you may be right. I certainly hope you are. But I must confess I don't look forward to my task with pleasure. I think I've got the roughest end."

"It'll be rough—there's no doubt about that—rough for all hands, I guess. And I hope you understand, Mr. Sylvester, that there ain't many men I'd trust to do what I ask you to. I appreciate your doin' it more'n I can tell you. Be as—gentle as you can, won't you?"

"I will. You can depend upon that."

"I do. And I shan't forget it. Good-by till the next time."

They shook hands. Captain Elisha returned to the boarding house, where he found a letter awaiting him. It was from Caroline, telling him of her engagement to Malcolm Dunn. She wrote that, while not recognizing his right to interfere in any way, she felt that perhaps he should know of her action. He did not go down to supper and when Pearson came to inquire the reason excused himself, pleading a late luncheon and no appetite. He guessed he would turn in early, so he said. It was a poor guess.

Next morning he went uptown. Edwards, opening the door of the Warren apartment, was surprised to find who had rung the bell.

"Mornin', Commodore," hailed the captain, as casually as if he were merely returning from a stroll. "Is Miss Caroline aboard ship?"

"Why—why, I don't know, sir. I'll see."

"That's all right. She's aboard or you wouldn't have to see. You and me sailed together quite a spell, so I know your little habits. I'll wait in the library, commodore. Tell her there's no particular hurry."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



## ALL CANNING STEPS IMPORTANT; WISE CANNERS HEED EVERY RULE

The first step in home canning of vegetables or fruits is to make sure that all the needed apparatus is handy and in condition for immediate use. As explained, this consists of a hot-water bath outfit (such as a wash boiler with a false bottom), or a steam-pressure canner, glass jars, tops and rubber rings (or cans and soldering outfit), a yard or two of clean cheesecloth for blanching and dipping, and the usual kitchen equipment of clean enameled pans, knives, spoons, wooden paddle, and sugar, salt and other condiments for flavoring. Tables and all utensils with which the product is to come in contact must be scrupulously clean—preferably scalded with boiling water.

### Use Fresh, Sound Products.

The fruits or vegetables to be canned must be fresh, sound and neither too green nor too ripe. Young vegetables give better results than old, woody or tough ones. Aim to get the products into the jars as quickly as is practicable. Every minute's delay lessens flavor and adds to the difficulty of canning. Such products as green peas or sweet corn are not fit to can if they are off the vines more than a few hours. Peas for canning should be picked early in the morning or during a cool spell and rushed into the cans. Don't let peas stand after they are shelled.

### Prepare Water Bath and Empty Jars and Lids.

Start your day's canning operations by putting your wash boiler or hot-water bath with its false bottom to boil on the fire. Before the water in it gets too hot place clean empty jars on their sides and put glass covers or metal caps in the bath. The metal caps preferably in a piece of cloth which may be lifted out conveniently. Cover the jars with water, put the lid on the boiler, and let the jars boil until you are ready to use them. They should be allowed to boil for at least 15 minutes. As it takes time for a big vessel of water to come to a boil, start this boiling of jars some time before you begin actually to prepare your fruit or vegetables. Try not to have your prepared fruits or vegetables wait any length of time to be put into the boiled jars.

Meanwhile start water for blanching to boil in a clean enameled pail.

Use only new rubber rings. Shortly before you will use the rubber rings add a teaspoonful of bicarbonate (cooking) soda to a quart of boiling water. Cleanse the rubber rings just before putting them on the jars by dipping them for one minute in this hot soda water.

### Cold Dipping.

If dipping in a cold water bath is advised for the product, the moment the bag of blanched material is taken from the boiling water plunge it into a vessel of clean cold water—the colder the better. Allow it to remain in the cold water only for the time specified. Do not allow it to soak in the cold water.

### Preparing Fruits and Vegetables.

Select sound, fresh fruits and vegetables and carefully wash in cold water. Do not put soft berries into water. Rinse them by pouring water over the berries in a colander, being careful not to mash or bruise them. Sort the product again and discard all bruised or defective pieces.

With clean hands and scalded utensils peel or scrape or cut up large products into pieces of canning size. If the hot jars are not yet ready—and they must have boiled for at least

### PROOFS OF GARDEN TOIL.

You can brag about your garden all winter if you have your canned evidence on the dinner table.

Concentrate products, especially soup mixtures, so that each container will hold as much canned food and as little water as possible.

Really there is nothing to canning fruit and vegetables except fresh products, care, cleanliness, good jars, and sufficient heat to sterilize products in the closed jars or cans and insure safety in keeping them.

### Shell of Lobster.

The shell of the lobster is imbued with a black or bluish pigment, secreted by the true skin, which also gives out the calcareous matter after each molt so that lime and pigment are blended together. The pigment becomes red in water at the temperature of 112 degrees.

### Neckwear in Youthful Effects.

Spring brought in its wake many bits of dainty neckwear—neckwear which will bring that air of dash and youthfulness that proves such an effective weapon to the summer maid. Straight from La Belle France the collar, vestee and cuff combination has won the heart of feminine America. A collar, vest and cuffs can be worn with a silk sweater, developed in black and white; the set itself may be of polka dot handkerchief linen in black and white. Tidy crocheted buttons trim

15 minutes—cover each dish of prepared product with a clean towel or scalded cover. Better yet, prepare only a small quantity at a time and rush into one or two jars. Then prepare another batch. The quicker the product is prepared and packed into the hot jar the better.

Blanching. Just before placing in the jars put the prepared product in the center of a clean cheesecloth square. Take the cloth by the corners and plunge the product into the clean boiling water in the blanching vessel. Allow it to remain in the boiling water only for the time specified for the particular product. Remove immediately and either dip into cold bath or place directly in the jars, as directed for the product.

### Packing the Jar.

Remove from the water bath the jars and covers, which must have been boiling for at least 15 minutes. As quickly as possible pack the blanched (and dipped) product into the boiled jars. Pack quickly and carefully, using a flat and narrow wooden paddle or wooden spoon. Eliminate all bubbles. Pack tightly but not so as to mash or crush the product.

Fill the jar to within one-half inch of the top with hot brine or water or juice if you are canning vegetables, or with hot sirup, fruit juice or merely clean hot water if you are canning fruit. Directions for making brines and sirups are included in the bulletin on canning issued for free distribution by the U. S. department of agriculture.

### Partial Sealing of Jars.

As each jar is filled and while it is still hot place a rubber ring cleansed in boiling soda and water on the jar. Screw down the boiled top, if a screw-top jar is used, but do not screw it tight. If glass-top jars are used, put on cover and slip wire over it, but do not press down side spring. Do not delay in putting on tops until the jar and top are cool.

Do not seal jars tight at this stage. The packed product will expand somewhat when the jars are boiled (processed), and there must be an outlet for the expanding air.

As each jar is partially sealed put it back in the hot-water bath from which some of the hot water has been removed and to which cold water has been added until the water is merely warm. Do not put cold jars directly into hot water. They will crack. Try to have filled jars and the water in the bath about the same temperature at the start.

Fill and partially seal all the jars as rapidly as possible and place them in the bath. See that when all are in the water comes over tops of the jars.

Put a tight cover on the vessel to keep the steam around the tops of the jars.

Allow the jars to remain in the boiling water for the time specified for the product. Begin counting the time for processing when the water around the jars in the water bath starts to boil.

### Sealing the Jars.

Remove jars from the bath at the end of the canning period prescribed for the particular vegetable or fruit.

Instantly clamp tightly or screw down the lid on each jar as it is taken out. Make certain there is no leak. Store jars to cool in a draft-free place. Test for leaks again next day. If any jar shows any signs of leaks replace faulty rubber, cap or container and reboil.

Bulletins issued for free distribution by the department of agriculture, Washington, D. C., tell all about canning in cans as well as in glass jars.

### Canning in Metal.